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ABSTRACT

Complementing existing regulations, this policy statement for South Australian schools presents educational goals and priorities for the decade and general implications for classroom, curriculum, and resource allocation. Background discussion covers factors influencing recent developments in South Australian education, a summary of the role of schools in society, and some considerations for educational planning in the 1980's. Basic aims for schools involve promoting the balanced development of students' cognitive, creative, physical, social, and vocational skills, as well as healthy psychological qualities. A framework of eight curriculum areas is given for school planning: environmental education, health and personal development, human society, language studies, mathematical studies, science and technology, the arts, and transition education. Schools are encouraged to adapt curricula to local needs, but four priorities are set for planning and teaching: basic numeracy and literacy, communication skills, skills for social living, and problem-solving skills. These priorities mark a shift in emphasis away from college preparatory education and toward students' social development. Community expectations to be observed by schools and important factors in curriculum planning are reviewed. Responsibilities of teachers, the Education Department, and parents in facilitating the best possible education are listed. A final summary underscores major policy issues. (MJL)

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OUR SCHOOLS AND THEIR PURPOSES

Into the 80s

EA 016 222

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Foreword

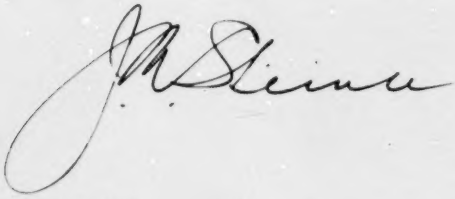
The development, interpretation and implementation of this statement, *Into the 80s*, is a most significant event in South Australian education. Many of us who are concerned with education recognised that the 1971 *Purposes of Schools* statement needed to be reviewed, updated and expanded. *Into the 80s* is the culmination of an extensive cooperative and consultative venture in educational policy development.

This document contains not only general statements of aims and purposes, but also guidelines for the development of school programmes. It contains policy statements which clearly indicate the educational framework within which government schools will operate in the coming years.

The intention of this document is to provide an appropriate balance between central direction and local needs. The policy statements allow for schools to interpret and develop programmes which meet individual needs.

Implementation of the *Into the 80s* policies will be a gradual process, and will be achieved by cooperative effort between all sections of the Education Department. Schools will be supported in their planning and programme development.

I express my sincere appreciation to the many people throughout the state who have contributed in many ways to the development of this important document.



J. R. Steinle
Director-General of Education
June, 1981

1
Introduction

The Education Department of South Australia, by publishing *Into the 80s*, is stating the purposes and goals of its schools for the coming decade. Some statements support what are present good practices; others clearly point to the need for change.

Many groups in society have indicated a strong interest in what schools do. As a result of recent changes, *Into the 80s* has been written to serve as the basis of educational policies and practices. Its length and structure do not allow a discussion here of the issues and assumptions. Those who responded to draft editions of the document emphasised that *Into the 80s* should be a consolidated, relatively brief statement of the policies and views of the Education Department. Respondents also emphasised that a curriculum framework is needed in view of the diverse opinions about what schools should teach.

SOME FEATURES OF THIS DOCUMENT

It replaces *The Purposes of Schools*

The Purposes of Schools was published in 1971 as a statement of the general aims of South Australian government schools. *Into the 80s* is designed to put that earlier statement into a contemporary context. It takes into account the important developments of the past and the changes needed to enable young people to meet the challenges of the future.

It looks at schooling as a continuing process

It is possible that some statements will appear more relevant to one level of schooling than to another. Nevertheless, they are intended for all schools regardless of level, kind or locality. However, the ways in which the issues and assumptions will be addressed will differ considerably. The main concern is that the education of individuals will be understood as a continuous process, each stage of which is vital.

It seeks to balance educational ideals with social realities

The document states aims and goals with the recognition that they may not all be easily or quickly achieved.

It is one of *several* key statements

The following statements also contain educational policies for South Australian government schools.

The Education Act (1972) and Regulations

The Act and its regulations prescribe the legal boundaries for education in South Australia. Among other things, the Act makes the Director-General of Education responsible for the school curriculum.

> The Director-General shall be responsible for the curriculum in accordance with which instruction is provided in government schools. (VII, 82, i).

The publication *Administrative Instructions and Guidelines* describes how the legal framework for curriculum is put into operation within the Education Department. School councils are authorised under part VIII of the Act; their powers and role are defined in section 6 of the Regulations. Part of their role is to advise the principal of the

> . . . considered view of the local community regarding educational developments within the school.

The Act makes schooling compulsory between the ages of 6 and 15 (I, 5, and VII, 82, i) although children may be accepted for enrolment after their fifth birthday. That is, schools are expected to cater for students under compulsion, within a certain age range, and also for numbers of students who are there voluntarily.

The Freedom and Authority Memorandum (1970)

In 1970 the then Director-General of Education delegated to school principals considerable freedom

> . . . to vary courses, to alter the timetable, to decide the organisation of the school and government within the school.

This was to be done within the framework of the Education Act and Regulations (121 (1) (b)) and Departmental policies, after consultation with parents and with the support of staff. Thus many decisions can be and are made at the school level, although the ultimate responsibility is the Director-General's.

Collectively, the factors above indicate some major boundaries for the education system; they are part of the background of this document and the issues raised in it.

It contains policy statements

Into the 80s is intended for use primarily by those who plan and administer educational programmes at the various Departmental levels and in schools. It states priorities and expectations for the Department and its schools for the 1980s, and ***the policy statements are binding on all schools in the Education Department.***

Into the 80s will be the basis of curriculum development, the formation of policies, the allocation of resources and, ultimately, what goes on in the classroom.

It is consistent with other similar statements

During the process of the development of *Into the 80s* similar statements of goals and purposes of other educational systems and institutions, both in Australia and overseas, have been considered. While remaining consistent with the major theoretical bases of such statements, *Into the 80s* has taken into account those characteristics and developments appropriate for South Australia.

It will be supported by resource papers

Into the 80s deals with key issues and principles. These are serious matters and should not be subject to short-term change. It is possible, however, that the school programmes, curriculum statements and teaching methods used to achieve these aims will be varied in the light of experience and new situations.

A number of resource papers will be issued from time to time to assist schools to work out the implications of *Into the 80s.*

2

Aims, priorities and expectations

This section presents, in abbreviated form for the reader, the most important matters for curriculum planning. These are described in more detail later in the document.

AIMS FOR SCHOOLS (see section 6)

Schools aim to help students develop the following:

- lively inquiring minds, a love of learning, and a willingness to apply effort to worthwhile tasks
- the ability to think rationally
- the use of the imagination
- powers of creative self expression
- powers of judgement
- physical and mental health
- self confidence, a sense of worth, and respect and consideration for others
- a coherent set of personal and social values and a commitment to them
- decision making and problem solving skills
- an understanding of themselves and their world
- competence in intellectual, social and physical skills
- knowledge of skills relevant to adult life and employment.

AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK (see section 7)

Environmental education
Health and personal development
Human society

Language studies
Mathematical studies
Science and technology
The arts
Transition education

PRIORITIES (see section 8)

Literacy and numeracy
Communication
Skills for social living
Problem solving skills

EXPECTATIONS (see section 9)

Schools, in an increasingly pluralist society, should emphasise communication, tolerance and cooperation as a community.

Schools should encourage, in this multicultural society, the understanding and appreciation of different cultures and ethnic groups.

Schools should ensure that students gain an understanding and appreciation of important aspects of the Australian environment—political, legal, historical, cultural, social, economic and physical.

Schools should seek to provide opportunities for the greatest possible development of each student.

Schools should encourage all individuals to strive for excellence.

Schools should encourage students, according to their level of development, to participate actively in the life of the school and its community.

Schools should emphasise the development of transferable skills and processes and the skills of learning to learn in order to encourage flexibility.

Schools should provide for different rates and styles which individuals develop in their learning.

Schools should take into account, in their planning of curriculum, the needs of those students who change schools from time to time.

Schools should provide an ordered and structured environment so that learning is facilitated.

Schools should consult and work with parents, community groups and other organisations in planning and carrying out educational programmes, and in the sharing of facilities and resources.

Schools should acknowledge their accountability by consulting the community about their aims and programmes, and by informing it about their subsequent decisions and their use of resources for those programmes.

3

Developments in South Australian education

Many factors have influenced the way in which South Australian education has developed in recent times.

LEVELS OF SCHOOLING

By the end of the second world war, government schools in South Australia were organised and administered in these ways.

- Primary schools catered for the first seven years of formal schooling. Some very large primary schools had a separate infants section for students in the first two years.
- Secondary schools provided education for up to five years, with differing emphases in the high and technical high schools.
- Area schools in country areas in almost all cases provided education for the whole span from years 1 to 10.
- A variety of opportunity and special classes existed, either linked with existing primary or secondary schools or as separate entities.

In the years following, until about 1970, there was a constant struggle to provide teachers, accommodation and materials for a rapidly increasing student population.

DECISION MAKING

The 1970 *Freedom and Authority* memorandum by the then Director-General caught the spirit of the changes that were evident in the education system.

In 1971 a concise statement, *The Purposes of Schools,* was issued providing a set of goals for school administrators and school planners. Because it has become necessary to expand those purposes *Into the 80s* has been written.

After 1974 the only certificates for students in South Australia, awarded on the basis of either internal or external assessment, were issued at year 12.

Teachers and school administrators found themselves, within a number of constraints, considerably freer to make decisions about school organisation and programmes.

INCREASED ENROLMENTS

Beginning in the post-war period higher birthrates, a desire for higher qualifications from employers, a general belief in the value of longer schooling and generally higher retention rates resulted in greatly increased school enrolments. The separate technical high and high schools of the past became, in a period of transition in the early 1970s, comprehensive high schools with programmes intended to cater for students of widely varying abilities, backgrounds and interests.

SOCIAL FORCES

During the 1970s schools were strongly influenced by new social pressures. The appointment of counsellors in secondary schools and the introduction of new courses in road safety, health and religious education for all levels were indicators of the response of the education system.

The disadvantaged schools programme of the Schools Commission gave specific support and attention to students and schools in socio-economic need.

In a state where over one-fifth of the school students did not have English as their "mother" language, schools found it necessary to introduce new approaches to the teaching of English and to see education for a multicultural society as a necessary emphasis.

Technological change, the influence of the media and significant changes in the life style of many people influenced strongly the environment and work of schools.

Education was seen as a means of social and career advancement.

TEACHING METHODS

In the 1970s the school system endeavoured to introduce the most useful and effective new teaching approaches. Learning was seen as an enjoyable, varied activity. Greater attempts were made to teach according to the stage of development of children, to see education as the development of the whole person and to encourage cooperation between the school and the parents. Faced with a rapid increase in knowledge in many fields, educators, while not underestimating the necessity for students to be able to master facts and content, believed that learning was a process, not merely the ability to recall facts and information.

NEW SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Following the building of the first "open" unit in 1969, the Education Department changed its plans for schools and facilities. Open plan and flexible plan teaching spaces, indoor sports and activity areas and resource centres were the main new features of school accommodation. A variety of teaching methods and flexible teaching groups were among the advantages of the changes of architecture.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

With the disappearance of certificates (except at year 12) and prescribed courses and syllabuses, schools and individual teachers had greater scope to make decisions about curriculum content, teaching methods and student assessment at all levels of schooling. This new situation in the 1970s proved a mixed blessing. Curriculum development was seen as a process of determining the needs of students, and of using teaching methods, materials and content to meet their needs and aspirations.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

In this time of rapid change, there are other factors which affect schools. The role of school councils in decisions about general educational and curricular matters and financial management has grown. A significant number of students and teachers change schools. There is a tendency for polarisation of views about discipline, assessment methods, the importance of content in courses and about "conservative" and "progressive" teaching methods.

THE NEED FOR A STATEMENT OF AIMS

With the old guidelines removed, the Director-General of Education resolved to issue a statement declaring the Department's position about the role of schools in our society, matters to be considered in educational planning at the various levels in the Department and the importance of the informal curriculum and its priorities for learning in schools. It would also specify those areas of the curriculum which should be common for all students during the years of compulsory education.

Into the 80s is that statement. It provides a framework within which administrators and teachers, parents, planners and students can make responsible decisions about the development and welfare of young people.

4

Schools in our society

The interaction between teacher and learner is at the heart of schooling. The quality of this relationship is the most important single factor in learning. The school exists to support that relationship, and in turn depends upon the Department and community for support.

In the tasks of understanding, planning for and responding to changing demands, schools should expect to have advice and support from the Education Department and other institutions whose work is concerned with the well-being of young people.

Schools are places where young people are assisted in their personal development and given guidance towards taking their place in the adult world. Schools face the challenge of matching the political, social and economic demands of society with those for intellectual, human and social development of the individual student. They should be humane institutions in which enjoyable and stimulating experiences are provided for their own sake and for the students' present time of life as well as for their future benefit.

Preparation for the adult world requires more than intellectual development; it requires social, physical, emotional and moral development. Character development is at least as important as intellectual development. Schools should encourage and assist young people in the development of many kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to grow into responsible adults capable of understanding and contributing to their society.

Since schools draw their students from a cross-section of their neighbourhood, and in some cases from a wider community, they may reflect a range of value positions and may adopt different responses to changes in and demands from society. Although they will necessarily respond to changes, schools should not be required to undertake all those social roles which society increasingly expects from them.

5

Educational planning in the 80s

Australian society is changing; changes in technology, in values, in expectations and lifestyles are affecting our society. Educational planners, whether at systemic or school level, need to be aware of both social and educational changes so that they can serve their communities and their clients more effectively. Some important considerations for educational planners in the 80s are indicated below.

SOCIETY

Although most South Australians live in cities, there are many who live in country towns or in comparative isolation. An educational system must cater for the needs of all children, wherever their location. Departmentally planned curricula need to be as usable in small country schools as in large metropolitan schools.

Our culture is marked by significant differences in values, lifestyles, ethnic backgrounds and aspirations. This diversity is healthy, provided that there is agreement on fundamental issues which will ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals.

Changes in society are certain to continue, although it is not possible to predict their exact nature. It also seems likely that the rate of change will continue to accelerate. Social changes, some of them caused by changes in technology, will alter patterns of living and working. Shorter working hours, periods of unemployment, retraining for new jobs requiring different skills, and an ageing population all have implications for school programmes.

The knowledge explosion of recent decades will continue. Sophisticated systems of storing knowledge may make it more difficult for ordinary citizens to gain access to information, unless they are equipped with appropriate skills with which to locate the information they require.

The influence of the mass media on people's lives is widely acknowledged; their influence on children's education may be greater than that of schools.

Although travel for social or recreational purposes may decrease as energy resources become scarcer or more expensive, families and individuals will increasingly have to move to new locations according to job requirements and changing domestic circumstances.

SCHOOLS

Schools, as centres where learners and teachers are brought together, will continue in the foreseeable future, although advances in electronic media will make possible alternative methods of learning, including home based. There is no single type of school which suits all purposes. The Education Department will continue to provide different models, such as R-2, R-7, R-12 and 8-12. Wherever possible, parents will be given the opportunity to exercise choice between schools.

Bodies other than schools—the mass media, the family, the church, and peer groups—contribute to the education of children. It is the primary responsibility of parents to coordinate those influences and guide the development of children. In that process schools play a supporting role.

Schools are provided for children, but they are also a community resource. It is expected that children will go out into the community and use it as a learning resource, but it is accepted that the community will use school facilities and resources when they are not required by teachers and students.

The Education Department, in consultation with schools, parents and the community at large, determines educational policies and general priorities, and allocates resources. Within the Departmental guidelines schools are expected to make their own decisions about school organisation, curricula and resource allocation.

Schools, particularly large ones, are by their nature complex organisations, and it is easy for individuals to feel insignificant in them. In the 80s, when social pressures on young people can be expected to increase, schools should provide a supportive environment.

Schools are expected to provide a sound general education for all students. In addition, secondary schools have traditionally provided a preparation for further studies at tertiary level. Not all students proceed to full-time tertiary studies and, particularly in the years after the period of compulsory schooling, it is essential to provide for the differing needs of all who stay on beyond the compulsory age of 15. The requirements of tertiary institutions are irrelevant to the majority of students.

LEARNERS AND LEARNING

Every person is entitled to be treated as an individual of worth.

People learn in different ways and at different rates. Within the available

resources, teachers need to provide programmes which take into account the individual student's ability and background.

Conditions which are conducive to learning include a secure, stable environment, a desire to learn, and a sense of self worth. Children should be assured of some success. For some young people in the schools of the 80s motivation will be difficult; the challenge to teachers and parents to motivate young people will be great.

Formal classroom learning is not the only kind that occurs in schools. Much learning occurs outside the classroom, and young people are a powerful influence on their fellow students.

All learners should be guided towards the situation where they assume much responsibility for their own learning. Asking questions, raising problems, and being encouraged to think critically and positively, while increasingly accepting responsibility for one's own learning, are important steps towards a person's maturity.

KNOWLEDGE

Since schools cannot teach all that there is to be known, some selection of what is to be learned is required. To some degree any selection is arbitrary, and the Education Department does not attempt to prescribe in detail what every child should learn. It does, however, provide guidelines, syllabuses and materials for schools to ensure that a broad and balanced education is available for every child in its schools. Within these guidelines schools determine what is essential and what is negotiable. In a time of rapid change and great social and cultural diversity this approach is the most realistic.

6

Aims for schools

In South Australia, schools aim to help students develop:

- lively inquiring minds, a love of learning, and a willingness to apply effort to worthwhile tasks
- the ability to think rationally
- the use of the imagination
- powers of creative self expression
- powers of judgement
- physical and mental health
- self confidence, a sense of worth, and respect and consideration for others
- a coherent set of personal and social values and a commitment to them
- decision making and problem solving skills
- an understanding of themselves and their world
- competence in intellectual, social and physical skills
- knowledge of skills relevant to adult life and employment.

These general aims are pursued in many ways, particularly through the formal curriculum of the school. There are also informal influences, planned and unplanned, which affect the degree to which the school's aims are realised. These include teachers' attitudes and personal example, the quality of the school environment, parental relationships with schools, organisational features of the school and the effects of peer group pressures.

7

The eight areas of the curriculum

Although students' learning is influenced by many factors, it is largely through the planned curriculum that the school's aims are pursued. Schools plan and organise learning experiences for children in many different ways. Regardless of how this is done, it is essential that a broad and balanced range of experiences be provided, and that the aims listed earlier be promoted through those learning experiences.

The framework of eight curriculum areas is the basis for planning and organising learning experiences in South Australian Departmental schools. The application of this framework will ensure appropriate learning experiences for students, both in scope and balance. It should be understood that the framework does not attempt to provide a total categorisation of knowledge. Any of the eight areas may contribute to any of the aims (in section 6).

Schools will implement this policy framework in a variety of ways. For many schools "subjects" will be the organisational units of the curriculum. By using the framework as a basis for planning, schools can ensure that the aims are met, irrespective of the particular method of implementation or the organisation of the school.

The areas of studies are presented in alphabetical order. There is no hierarchy of importance and no expectation that defined amounts of time or resources will be devoted to those areas in schools. Advice about implications for planning in schools will be included in the resource papers.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Studies in environmental education provide opportunities for students:

- to develop an awareness and understanding of the physical and biological environment
- to develop positive and responsible attitudes towards conserving the natural environment and its resources

- to develop skills which enable them to understand and live in harmony with their physical world.

Rationale

We need to understand our world, the forces which have shaped it and the patterns which prevail in it. Our dependence upon nature and the interrelationships between living and non-living things are objects of traditional study in schools, but their study has assumed greater importance in recent years, as it has become clearer that our very existence is threatened by insensitivity to or lack of understanding of the effects of human interaction with the environment. Particular importance is attached to the Australian environment.

HEALTH AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Studies in health and personal development provide opportunities for students:

- to develop skills, attitudes and understandings which will promote physical, mental, social and emotional health for themselves
- to gain understanding of, and respect for, themselves and others
- to develop a coherent set of personal and social values to which they commit themselves, including honesty, consideration for others, self discipline, acceptance of responsibility, self reliance and initiative
- to develop skills for recreational use.

Rationale

Before we can fully understand others, we need some understanding of ourselves. Education in our system seeks to give people the ability to understand and control their own lives, and the capacity to live a rich and meaningful life. A sense of self worth, the development of those qualities which encourage people to contribute to their community and a knowledge of the factors which contribute to mental and physical health are also important.

Personal development should be seen to include consideration for the rights, beliefs and needs of others, and the development of interests, attitudes and capacities which give satisfaction to the individual and support to others.

Personal development includes the acquisition of physical skills.

HUMAN SOCIETY

Studies in human society provide opportunities for students:

- to develop skills, attitudes and understandings which will enable people to participate effectively in their society

- to develop an awareness and understanding of social, economic, political and legal systems, including those of Australia
- to prepare for the future through an understanding of the past and the present
- to develop an understanding and appreciation of various cultures, including Australian culture
- to develop an awareness and understanding of various value and belief systems, including the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

Rationale

Education should not only enrich the lives of individuals and develop their capacities but also enable them to understand their social, economic, political and legal environment and to participate effectively in society.

Studies in health and personal development seek to provide young people with the opportunity to recognise and develop their talents, but these talents are developed in a wider social context. This area of human society is concerned with the broader issues of organisations, institutions, and patterns and trends in human social behaviour. Studies in this area seek to develop positive attitudes towards other peoples, as well as the understanding of different lifestyles, cultures, belief systems and ways of organising communities. They also provide insights into human achievements and recognise our heritage.

Throughout the studies in this area there should be a focus on Australian culture, lifestyles and systems since the great majority of young people in our schools will spend most of their lives in Australian communities.

LANGUAGE STUDIES

Studies in language provide opportunities for students:

- to understand and use English effectively
- to encounter literature of the English language at an appropriate level
- to foster use of the imagination
- to learn languages other than English in as many cases as possible
- to become familiar with other related forms of communication, and their inter-relationships with language.

Rationale

Language is basic to learning, and although much language learning is done before children start school, the school gives strong emphasis to language learning, both as a tool for further learning and as an important part of communication. Without it, effective participation in society is very difficult. Communication is not confined to language but for most people language is the most common and most important form of communication. The use of language gives meaning to our experience.

Through language studies, young people are introduced to the stimulating world of literature.

It is most desirable for people in our multicultural society to be familiar with more than one language, and schools, wherever possible, should provide for the learning of languages other than English.

MATHEMATICAL STUDIES

Studies in mathematics provide opportunities for students:

- to develop the skills, attitudes and understandings of mathematics which will enable them to cope effectively in society
- to develop a growing understanding of the place of mathematics in the modern world and its applications in modern life
- to appreciate its role and value in personal educational development
- to provide a foundation for the study of more advanced forms of mathematics.

Rationale

Students need to learn basic number facts and computational skills, but they should also acquire and be able to apply skills in other aspects of mathematics. In addition, they should be able to use the more common mathematical aids and, at a more advanced level, be familiar with the capabilities of computers.

Because simple calculations will be required in everyday living, and access to calculators and computers will not always be possible, a thorough grounding in basic number facts and simple, common arithmetical processes will be a pre-requisite for social living and also for study of more sophisticated or advanced aspects of mathematics.

Once this basic numeracy is acquired, the focus of mathematical studies will shift. Some students will experience the intellectual challenge of mathematics at a more advanced level.

Many students will gain insight into the contributions of mathematics to educational, scientific and technological progress.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Studies in science and technology provide opportunities for students:

- to develop knowledge and understanding of chosen content within the biological and physical sciences
- to develop the attitude of scientific enquiry and skills of scientific method
- to develop positive attitudes towards the responsible uses of science and technology

- to develop skills in the use of technology
- to consider the design process and applications of technology in the modern world
- to gain insights into technology, its relationship with science and the ways in which science and technology have fashioned our environment and lives.

Rationale

Science and technology have shaped and continue to shape our world. A knowledge of the contributions of science and the technological (design) process is important in understanding how our society has developed, and in recognising some of the possibilities which the future holds.

In addition, we require a knowledge of scientific laws and principles governing our existence so that we may understand our environment better and improve the human condition. Understanding the process by which technology is developed and used to solve problems, developing skills in its use, and learning how to apply technologies safely for the maximum benefit of ourselves and others are important elements in education for a complex modern society.

THE ARTS

Studies in the arts provide opportunities for students:

- to learn to appreciate and participate in the arts
- to become familiar with a wide range of media of expression
- to practise self expression, develop powers of discrimination, and learn to discuss the arts in an informed way
- to use the arts as media for learning
- to derive enjoyment from the spectator, the expressive/creative, and the performance modes of any art form.

Rationale

The arts assist us to understand ourselves and others, and help us to make meaning of life and the world. They are powerful tools of learning, and have always been among the richest sources of satisfaction for human beings. They transmit, reinforce, or question a culture. They can be enjoyed for their own sake, but can also be used to support and enrich learning generally.

Through school programmes in music, dance, visual arts, drama, film and other art forms, children can be introduced to a wide range of media, and a range of models of excellence. They can be encouraged to participate in pleasurable and enriching experiences, and develop their own talents. They may be assisted to use more profitably the increased leisure time which is becoming available to them.

TRANSITION EDUCATION

Studies in transition education provide opportunities for students:

- to have experiences and undertake studies aimed towards work, leisure and life skills
- to develop an understanding of the world outside school, particularly the world of employment
- to cope with and adjust to times of transition in their lives; such times for most persons will be when they move from one level of schooling to another, or from schooling to employment. There will be many other occasions.
- to develop attitudes and skills which will enable them to cope with changing employment patterns.

Rationale

In one sense all schooling is concerned with transition; with preparing students to leave school and take their place as independent citizens, autonomous and eventually self supporting.

However, at almost all levels of education young people need programmes to assist them to understand aspects of the world of employment. The programmes may focus on the range of possible careers, or they may be concerned with the role of trade unions. They may help students to identify their own vocational aptitudes and interests, or they may provide secondary students with opportunities to experience for themselves the realities of the work place. These programmes and learning experiences come under the broad heading of ***transition education.***

The fact that there are alternatives of full time, paid employment, community service, and/or the effective, satisfying use of leisure time should influence the kinds of transition education programmes in schools.

Although many aspects of transition studies can be included in regular school curricula, there are some programmes that are best described as transition education. Some aspects of these programmes are likely to be relevant to secondary schooling only, but may be adapted for the early levels of schooling.

8

The four priorities

Within the broad framework defined by Departmental policies, schools are encouraged to adapt their curricula to the specific local context. For this reason it is inevitable and indeed desirable that there will be some differences in curriculum content, organisation and emphasis. However, the broad aims are the same, and there are some aspects of the curriculum which will need special emphasis in all schools during the 80s.

The priorities identified here are not all new, and they are not the only concerns to be considered in curriculum planning and teaching. The emphasis to be given them represents a shift from an education that was sometimes seen as concentrating excessively on preparing students for tertiary studies. It indicates a movement towards a broader interpretation of personal development, one which emphasises more strongly the social responsibilities of people living together in communities, and recognises that intellectual development is not the only responsibility of schools.

All schools in the 80s are expected to give priority to:

- the basic skills of numeracy and literacy
- communication skills
- skills for social living
- problem solving skills.

The importance of these aspects of the curriculum is such that they need to be emphasised at all levels of schooling and by all teachers. They can be developed outside or inside the classroom, in formal or informal situations. These skills are important, but so also are the related attitudes and knowledge which enable them to be used effectively.

SKILLS OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY

In any change of direction, and in any re-allocation of priorities, *schools must continue to give special emphasis to the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.* These are of fundamental importance at all levels of schooling.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills, including the ability to use languages effectively, both orally and in writing, are extremely important. All teachers have a responsibility to develop these skills in the young people they teach, regardless of the curriculum area or subject being studied.

Communication is not confined to language, and should not be thought of as being identical with the subject "English" in schools. Communication occurs in many ways, and different forms of communication can be developed in art, film, drama or music, for example. Knowledge of the visual media is vital in an age of electronic media when children are exposed to films and television probably more than they are to books. The ability to interpret graphic representations, such as maps or bar graphs, and to understand "body language" is a communication skill.

Nevertheless, *language is the most common and most important form of communication. It is basic to most learning, and as such commands a high priority in its own right.*

For some children who do not hear English used extensively or fluently in the home, additional school assistance is necessary. An awareness of the importance of all forms of communication, and especially language, should be common to all teachers, who should consciously try to encourage the development of communication skills.

SKILLS FOR SOCIAL LIVING

These skills include, but go far beyond, what are sometimes known as social survival skills. There are simple skills and items of basic knowledge which assist people to survive in communities, and these ought to be learned in schools. Skills such as using a telephone book or a compass, a knowledge of first aid, keyboard skills and defensive driving skills are *basic* skills.

Beyond this level there are many more complex skills which assist people to function effectively in society. They include the ability to discriminate between political candidates, to contribute to a committee meeting or a group project and to become an effective parent or family member.

Necessary also is the ability to cope with personal pressures which may result from any interaction with other people, or from living in our kind of society. Schools can help young people to understand the effects of drugs, or to cope with the stresses which may face single parent families or those who move frequently. They can also help to develop the interpersonal skills required in any group, including the family.

Students should be advised how to establish links with social organisations of many kinds such as clubs, churches and community agencies.

A more generalised social awareness also needs to be developed, so that rational consideration of environmental issues or economic forces in our society is possible. Adjustment to social changes caused by developing technologies such as computers will be assisted if there is some

understanding of the relationship between technological and social change. Further reference to this issue is made in the section on expectations.

The point here is that *schools need to give high priority to the whole area of preparation for effective participation in society.*

PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

Being able to locate information that is relevant to a problem, to organise it in ways that bring new insights and to formulate possible solutions and test them requires skills of a high order, but they are essential ones. They are particularly important in an age of rapid change when schools cannot equip students with all the knowledge that they will need during their lifetime, since even the nature of the new problems to be faced cannot be predicted. *The development of techniques of problem solving and new ways of looking at problems, rather than the presentation of ready made solutions to present or past problems, must be a high priority.*

An enquiring attitude is appropriate in schools. This is not to say that students should be encouraged to question or criticise only, but rather that a willingness to raise questions and a desire to seek realistic solutions to problems are as essential parts of the learning process as the acquisition of factual knowledge. That approach is as much a part of geography or design as it is of social studies or science. It should be developed in all curriculum areas.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that learning is an active process. People learn by *doing*, whether the doing is hammering a nail, writing a lyric or programming a computer. Learners need to be able to see the point of what they are learning and need to be able to apply their developing skills, attitudes and knowledge to real situations as much as possible.

Additionally, there are many occasions when divergent thinking will provide solutions not reached by more conventional reasoning. The creative leap of the imagination may occur in any subject or mode of enquiry. Its value should be recognised and encouraged by all teachers.

9

Twelve expectations

The eight curriculum areas provide a *framework* to assist schools to plan educational programmes for their students during the years of compulsory schooling.

The four priorities in a school's programme, underlying the curriculum areas, form a *foundation* for the *total programme* of a school. Because the priorities are important in every part of the life of a school, they are not limited to formal teaching or to the structured programme. In a sense, however, the *curriculum areas* and the *priorities* describe the work planned and done in and through the school.

Other factors arise when considering the school as a community of people who come under strong outside influences—from the wider community and its leaders, from social forces, and from the intangible characteristics that make us Australian. Some of these *expectations* will be fulfilled by the ways that school programmes are drawn up; others will be revealed in the tone of the school, the sense of community among all who belong to it, and in its responsiveness to the outside world.

The following twelve expectations are those which the schools of the Education Department should observe. They are not listed in order of importance.

Schools, in an increasingly pluralist society, should emphasise communication, tolerance and cooperation as a community.

Comment

Our society is divided over many issues. That there must be differences in values and lifestyles has been generally accepted, but not without tensions.

Schools cannot eliminate divisions or conflicts. It is recognised, too, that excessive tolerance can at times be inadvisable. But schools can contribute to communication and a spirit of tolerance, can encourage young people to achieve common purposes, and can support coexistence where there are differences.

Schools should encourage, in this multicultural society, the understanding and appreciation of different cultures and ethnic groups.

Comment

The increasing richness and variety of Australian culture reflect the contributions of the many different national backgrounds of those people who now comprise the Australian population. The content of courses and the teaching methods of schools should take into account that one-fifth of today's students have either come from a background where the "mother" tongue is not English, or have at least one parent from such a background.

There are many reasons—cultural, geographical, economic and human, to name several—why understanding and acceptance of all groups in our society will have positive benefits and also present challenges.

Schools should ensure that students gain an understanding and appreciation of the Australian environment—political, legal, historical, cultural, social, economic and physical.

Comment

The Australian identity to which so many groups and cultures have contributed is constantly growing and changing. In the further development of the national identity, it is important for young people to be aware of and to understand their heritage.

The early history of the country and its Aboriginal people, the early history of white settlement, the country's geography and the emergence of its social structures and institutions are all important and their study should form part of any child's education.

In learning about their country and their heritage, students should be encouraged to develop a pride in being Australian. This does not mean an uncritical acceptance of all things Australian. Rather, it is to suggest that if Australians are to make a positive contribution to their nation's development, they will need to understand their past, their present social and geographical context, and the potential for future development.

Australia and Australians are increasing their contacts at many levels with the rest of the world. The study of other nations and races and our relationships with them should also be part of the school curriculum. Nevertheless, a knowledge of Australia and the development of some pride in being Australian deserve a prior place in Australian education.

Schools should seek to provide opportunities for the greatest possible development of each student.

Comment

The phrase "Equality of educational opportunity" is often used to describe a goal of education. To give effect to this aspiration, schools should aim to provide opportunities for all students to achieve their greatest possible development—girls, boys, Asians, Aborigines, the poor, the handicapped, the gifted, the slow learning, the average. Changes may well be required in school curricula, organisation and timetabling to achieve this goal. In some cases this may mean that a larger share of resources is directed for a time towards disadvantaged groups to promote greater equality of educational opportunity for individuals within those groups.

Counselling of students to ensure their awareness of the full range of career and life opportunities is a continuing responsibility of the school. Teachers and counsellors should help students to understand how stereotyping affects their career and life options.

Deployment of staff is another area where disadvantages can be created or aggravated unwittingly. The tendency to allocate the most experienced staff to the most senior or most able classes, and the least experienced staff to the most challenging classes is rarely justifiable. The decision on the best distribution of teachers can only be made within the school, but it should be made with a full knowledge of the consequences for all groups of students.

Schools should encourage all individuals to strive for excellence.

Comment

There are two perspectives on the pursuit of excellence. From one viewpoint, excellence means the individual attaining the very best "standard" or "outcome" of which he/she is capable. Thus schools should encourage students to do their best in any worthwhile activity. From the other viewpoint, excellence means attaining a "standard" or "outcome" which is excellent by any standards.

Thus, the pursuit of excellence in this context is applicable to all students—irrespective of the task and irrespective of the students' abilities.

Teachers might also draw attention to the many examples of excellence to be found in our society and culture, and encourage students to aim for excellence, whatever the chosen field of endeavour.

Schools should encourage students, according to their level of development, to participate actively in the life of the school and its community.

Comment

Students can learn much in the classroom about the democratic process of making and carrying out decisions. They should have opportunities to practise democratic procedures in classroom and school activities. Outside the school they can observe parliament, councils and other bodies at work in the community, and they can take part in responsible social action.

A healthy democracy depends on the active involvement of many citizens, not only of the committed minority. Schools can provide continuing opportunities to impress upon students the importance of developing the required skills for taking part in democratic organisations.

Schools should emphasise the development of transferable skills and processes and the skills of learning to learn in order to encourage flexibility.

Comment

We have clearly stated that four priorities should underlie the teaching and learning programmes in schools. However, this should not be taken to

suggest that there is an agreed amount of content that students should master in the curriculum areas. Students certainly need to develop the ability to understand and memorise certain key facts and information. But many of the facts that are taught today may soon be irrelevant, inadequate or inaccurate. For that reason it is wise to concentrate strongly upon the learning of principles and processes rather than on the learning of facts as an end in itself. Knowing how to find and organise information, and to carry out tasks and solve problems should assist students to meet changing situations. An attitude which accepts change as normal will assist young people to cope with the changes they will inevitably face.

Educational institutions themselves will need to be flexible if organisation and administration are to respond to changing circumstances and meet the different as well as changing needs of individuals.

Schools should provide for different rates and styles which individuals develop in their learning.

Comment

Students learn at different rates. While individual learning programmes for every student may not be possible in a school, flexible organisation which encourages such options as temporary withdrawal from a class, link courses, work experience programmes, vertical grouping, individual assignments, crosstutoring and setting can provide many of the benefits of individualisation.

Students also learn in different ways. For many in today's schools of wide ranging student ability, learning comes by doing. Schools need to provide opportunities for all kinds of learning, including practical activities which are not less important than intellectual pursuits. Practical learning experiences are a foundation for a more advanced theoretical insight and understanding.

Schools should take into account, in their planning of curriculum, the needs of those students who change schools from time to time.

Comment

Many children change schools, within this state and from state to state, as they grow older or family circumstances change. While it would be a retrograde step even to attempt to have identical courses or materials in schools at the various levels, nevertheless the Education Department and its schools should continuously strive to minimise disruption to the programmes of children who change schools.

The implementation by schools of the framework of the eight areas of the curriculum proposed in this document will assist students who change schools. The availability of better information about study offerings in schools, and continuing attention to transition from one stage of schooling to another are proposed as further ways of addressing this serious issue.

Schools should provide an ordered and structured environment so that learning is facilitated.

Comment

Many of the learning activities in schools are organised in groups. Often the interaction among students assists learning since they learn much from each other, but this can be ensured best when the situation is a controlled one. However unobtrusive control and organisation may be, they are necessary. The purpose of such control and organisation is to provide the order and structure that will enable students to work without interference from others and will also enable them to gain the reassurance and support that many young people need.

Structure, organisation and control are means towards an end, not an end in themselves. They need to be tempered by flexibility, understanding and concern for individuals if the underlying educational aims are to be achieved. Spontaneity and play also have their place, particularly in the early childhood years. Good teachers will find the balance between organisation and spontaneity which will provide the most effective learning situation.

An ordered and structured environment should be able to be modified so that students can become increasingly responsible for their own learning.

Schools should consult and work with parents, community groups and other organisations in planning and carrying out educational programmes, and in the sharing of facilities and resources.

Comment

Parents are playing an increasing part in the life and functioning of schools, and should be encouraged to continue their involvement. They are represented on school councils set up to advise and assist principals, and there are many other ways in which they contribute to school life.

Both parents and teachers have a vital role in the education of young people. Parents have the prior responsibility; teachers provide expertise and special skills to assist them. Each has a role to play, and the partnership is most productive when both contribute.

There are many resources in the community on which schools can draw; the whole community can be a learning resource, but if schools are to make the most effective use of this resource, flexible forms of school organisation and timetabling need to be devised, and proper safeguards taken.

If the school is to be in partnership with the community of which it is part then it must be prepared to make its facilities available to the community, providing again that proper safeguards are taken, at times when the school itself is not using these facilities. For such purposes, the school must receive appropriate reimbursement from the community.

Schools should acknowledge their accountability by consulting the community about their aims and programmes and by informing it about their subsequent decisions and their use of resources for those programmes.

Schools are accountable to their students, parents, the community and the Education Department.

Comment

The schools of the Education Department are accountable to the community for the general educational programme and the expenditure of funds. *Into the 80s* is a public statement of educational aims and the community is entitled to expect that all reasonable measures will be taken to fulfil those aims, within the limits of available resources.

At present a school is accountable in three ways; it must take its community's views into account in planning its programmes, it must provide information about its educational programmes and activities, including its policy on student assessment and reporting, and it must account for expenditure of funds. It must be clear, however, that schools cannot accept total responsibility for the development of young people. They accept responsibility for their contribution to the development of their students. But educational aims are not guarantees of success. Provided that teachers take all reasonable steps to implement those aims, and in so doing, exercise professional skill and judgement, they are being accountable.

10

Planning the school curriculum

In planning and organising its curriculum a school must take many factors into account. These include the following:

- Education Department policies, priorities, and guidelines, including the statements of policy in this document
- the school's philosophy, aims and curriculum policies
- the local context, including the priorities of the local community
- the characteristics of students, their needs, ages and preferences
- the expertise, skills and experience of the staff
- school type, size and facilities
- different possible curriculum structures and forms of school organisation.

THE EIGHT AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM

This framework provides a basis for school planning in the eight curriculum areas.

Environmental studies
Health and personal development
Human society
Language studies
Mathematical studies
Science and technology
The arts
Transition education

All students under compulsion to attend school are expected to take part in learning experiences from each of the eight areas. This should happen each year. However, the length of that experience and the weighting given to it

may vary from one child to another, from one school to another, and from one year to another of the child's schooling.

Obviously, very young children will not be greatly concerned with the employment aspect of transition education. Similarly, the balance between language studies and science and technology studies which is considered appropriate for a ten-year old is likely to be different from that considered appropriate for a fourteen-year old. In the same way, language studies for one child may include English, French and Greek; for another English may be the only language studied. The question of the balance of the curriculum for an individual child or a particular school is best answered at school level by teachers with full knowledge of the specific situation.

Any existing subject is likely to contribute to more than one area of the curriculum framework. Certainly it is not suggested that these eight areas can be equated with present subjects. Nor is there any suggestion that subjects or programmes which do not fit obviously into the framework should be excluded from schools. Departmental policy is that *at least* these eight areas should be represented in the school curriculum.

MATERIALS

Materials may be chosen from a variety of sources. Schools are encouraged to develop their own curricula according to the needs of their students, but should ensure that they operate within the policies and guidelines provided by the Education Department.

Materials are available from many sources, and may be adopted or adapted by schools. The extent of adaptation will depend upon the time and expertise available to staff. Where syllabuses are provided by the Education Department, they may be used as provided, or adapted in the same way as other syllabuses or course materials, subject to the proviso that any changes must be consistent with Education Department policies and guidelines.

APPROVAL

School curricula must be approved. Since the Director-General of Education, under the terms of the Education Act, is responsible for the curriculum in schools, it is necessary for approval to be given by him, either directly or by delegation. Approval may be specific to particular schools or may be general for all Departmental schools. At the Departmental level approval to proceed with the development of materials may be required at several stages, according to the level of development. Details of these curriculum approval procedures are available in a Departmental document, *Curriculum Authority and Responsibility in Government Schools.*

R-12 FRAMEWORK

Education Department curricula are planned on an R-12 basis. Only when there is a broad framework applicable to all schools is it possible to plan

curricula on the basis of some logical and sequential development from reception to year 12.

For many years there were distinct gaps between different stages of schooling. Junior primary schools formed one stage, primary schools another and secondary schools a third. Only in area schools was there the possibility of uninterrupted development for children and deliberate planning by school administrators. Current Departmental policy emphasises the value of R-12 planning and, as appropriate, recent curricula have been developed on this basis.

In their own curriculum planning, schools should be familiar with what is done at other levels of schooling—particularly in nearby schools, to or from which numbers of students may be transferring.

11

Responsibilities of teachers

The legal responsibilities of teachers are described in the Education Act and Regulations. In addition, in curriculum planning and teaching, there are unwritten expectations which influence the professional work of teachers.

The responsibilities of teachers are shared with other teachers, the administrators of the Education Department, parents and the general community.

TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Two significant changes have occurred in recent years with regard to curriculum planning and teaching programmes. Firstly, more decisions are now made at school level. Secondly, the fundamental right of parents to make decisions about their children has made it necessary for schools to consult with parents and to explain the aims and nature of school programmes.

Teachers have, therefore, an obligation to:

- inform parents of the aims of courses and activities, before and during the programmes
- consult with parents about, and encourage their support for the programmes
- keep parents informed of the progress of their children
- understand and attempt to meet the educational needs of all their students
- use effective methods to monitor and attempt to improve the quality of their teaching.

They also have the right to:

- expect cooperation from parents in meeting the above obligations
- expect parents to support the school's aims by encouraging a positive attitude and effort and responsible behaviour from their children

- expect parents to inform the school promptly of successes and problems experienced by students in any part of their school programme.

TEACHERS AND THE COMMUNITY

Schools and their local communities in South Australia have a proud history of cooperation and understanding. Teachers can further develop this collaboration by:

- using available community resources, persons and facilities, in enriching the learning experiences of children
- promoting the reputation and work of the school in the community
- responding positively both to praise and criticism.

TEACHERS AND THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Education Department consists of *individuals* as well as sections of a large organisation. However, since the Director-General has specific responsibilities under the Education Act, the officers of the Department have an overall responsibility for schools in administering the provisions of the Act.

The responsibilities of teachers, with regard to the Department in general, include an acceptance that:

- they are part of the total Department and should develop an understanding of its structure and functioning
- they should be aware of their responsibilities under the Act and Regulations
- in their professional work they should develop understanding of both the freedom and constraints for teachers in the Department as indicated by Departmental policies and guidelines.

12

Responsibilities of the Education Department

The Education Department, through its organisational structures and officers, seeks to allocate resources (human, material and financial) and to develop policies which assist all schools to provide the best possible educational opportunities for all young people.

To assist schools to provide the best possible environment and educational programmes for young people, the Education Department, within the available resources, will:

- develop and promulgate policies to enable schools to function responsibly and effectively in the education of their students
- develop and promulgate guidelines for curriculum planning, implementation and organisation in schools
- develop effective strategies for monitoring and attempting to improve the quality of educational programmes in schools
- develop and make available for schools curriculum, course and teaching guidelines and materials for student use, according to the resources available to do so. In these tasks the Education Department has a responsibility to take into account new knowledge, innovations and events in education world wide
- allocate resources (human, material and financial) to schools as equitably as possible, given the differences in school programmes and the needs of school populations
- develop procedures for approving and monitoring school curricula
- inform the sections of the Department and the community about developments across the Department and its schools.

13

Responsibilities of parents

In order to provide the best possible learning environment, curricula and teaching methods, schools need continuing information and support from parents. Again, it is pointed out that the aspirations of parents and the school can be fully realised only through frankness, cooperation and acceptance of the roles of each.

So that students can derive the greatest benefit from their schooling, parents should be willing to:

- provide information to the school about factors relevant to the student's school performance
- assist the school to ensure a student's regular attendance and participation in school life
- assist the school in building a positive attitude and self concept for each student
- provide information to, and active support for, their elected representatives on school councils and affiliated organisations. In this way, members of school councils and other bodies will be able to fulfil their role as representatives of the parent community more effectively.

14

Departmental policies in *Into the 80s*

The following Departmental educational policy statements are included or are implicit in *Into the 80s*.

Balanced development

In addition to fostering intellectual development, schools will aim to provide a balance of social, physical, emotional and moral development for their students. *(Section 4)*

Different types of schools

The Education Department will, within available resources, provide different types of schools according to the needs of an area or community. *(Section 5)*

Educational programmes

Within the policies, planning frameworks, curriculum areas and subject guidelines which it provides, the Education Department will encourage schools to determine their educational programmes. *(Section 5)*

The eight curriculum areas

Schools will ensure that students, during their years of compulsory education, are provided with organised learning experiences in the eight stated curriculum areas. *(Section 7)*

The four priorities at all levels

All schools will ensure that the four stated priorities are given emphasis at all levels of schooling. *(Section 8)*

The school environment

The Education Department will encourage and support its schools in emphasising communication, tolerance and cooperation as a community. *(Section 9)*

Cultural and ethnic understanding

Schools will encourage the understanding and appreciation of different

cultures and ethnic groups. This will be reflected in both the school environment and the educational programme. *(Section 9)*

The Australian environment

Schools will ensure that students gain an understanding and appreciation of the Australian environment. *(Section 9)*

Development of each student

Schools will seek to provide opportunities for the greatest possible development for each student. *(Section 9)*

Students who change schools

Schools, in their planning of curriculum, will give consideration to those students who change school from time to time. *(Section 9)*

Community participation

Schools will consult and work with parents, community groups and other appropriate organisations in planning and carrying out their educational programmes. *(Section 9)*

Accountability

Schools will acknowledge accountability to their students, parents, the community and the Education Department by consulting their community about educational aims and programmes, providing information about programmes and activities, developing policies on student assessment, and reporting and accounting for their use of resources. *(Section 9)*

Teacher performance

Teachers will accept responsibility for improving their teaching performance through the support and monitoring structures of the Education Department. *(Section 9)*

Curriculum approval

The curriculum for and in Departmental schools will be approved according to procedures and by persons approved by the Director-General. *(Section 10)*

Responsibilities of teachers

The responsibilities and rights of teachers will include those set out in section 11 of this document.

Responsibilities of the Education Department

The responsibilities of the Education Department will include those set out in section 12 of this document.

Responsibilities of parents

All appropriate methods will be used by the Department to encourage parents to meet the responsibilities set out in section 13 of this document.